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THE MUSICAL TIMES, And Singing Class Circular.

JANUARY 1st, 1852.

THE COLORED ENVELOPES AGAIN !

Our book-keeper, whose irreverent laugh broke off our conversation on this subject (see No. 80, Jan. 1, 1851), was so well satisfied with the effect of it, in the renewed subscriptions to our paper, that he begs its substance to be repeated. He shall speak for himself.

Book-keeper. I own, though I did laugh, that a good many subscribers renewed, who had the colored envelopes; but then it was because you reported our talk.

Editor. But I recommended that the *Musical Times* be bought of the nearest bookseller or news-vendor, for then it only costs 1s. 6d. per annum (without postage), instead of 2s. 6d., besides being *flat* and *uncreased*. What accounts can you have to collect?

Book-keeper. I have still a great many subscribers who live in out-of-the-way places, or who get their paper easier by post; and therefore you must again explain that the colored envelope is sent to remind them that the subscription wants renewing, or I can't send any more papers.

Editor. Come, come, those who have had the work regularly, only want reminding, to make the two-and-sixpences pour in upon you.

Book-keeper. Ah! but a great many forget again, and leave me a long list, making altogether a large sum, although it's only half-a-crown a-piece; they are so thoughtless!

[*Exit grumbling.*]

We feel sure our readers will take *our* part, and by early sending their half-crowns, put our grumbler to the blush (if he can blush).

ENGLISH GLEE & MADRIGAL COMPOSERS.

No. II.

Contributed by E. HOLMES, Author of the "Life of Mozart."

THE first publication of English madrigals began in the latter part of the reign of Elizabeth, about 1590, and was continued industriously throughout a great part of the succeeding century. Thomas Weelkes, bachelor of music, and a gentleman of the chapel of James I., organist of Winchester, and afterwards of Chichester, brought out in 1597 'a collection of madrigals for three, four, five, and six voices;' the next year, 'ballads and madrigals for five voices;' two years later, 'madrigals for five voices;' and in the same year, 'madrigals of six parts, apt for voices and viols'

—at once showing prolific powers, and the favorable reception which compositions of this kind received. He was the friend and admirer of Thomas Morley, and composed an elegy on his death.

It seems highly probable, also, that Weelkes was the friend of Shakespeare; for some of the words of his first set of madrigals are taken from the "Passionate Pilgrim," the words of which appeared with his music before they were printed elsewhere, or acknowledged by their author among his published poems. The inference that the intercourse of friendship procured him access to this work, is therefore not unwarrantable. Madrigal composition was the music to which Shakespeare principally listened, and which furnished him with those beautiful allusions to the art which remain in the fullest force of their application to the present day. Dowland, the only musician actually named by Shakespeare, wrote chiefly in plain counterpoint—in parts consisting of notes of the same length; and it seems as if the genius of this composer, aiming chiefly at simple expression, melody, and sentiment, was especially adapted to please the ear of a poet delighting in "the concord of sweet sounds," but uninstructed in the learned intricacies of fugue and canon. Dowland also possessed fascinating personal talents and acquirements. He was an instrumental artist in an ungrateful time; he played exquisitely on the lute, but the patronage which he received did not enable him to support himself in the position to which his exertions and merit entitled him; he left England, and died in the service of the Court of Denmark.

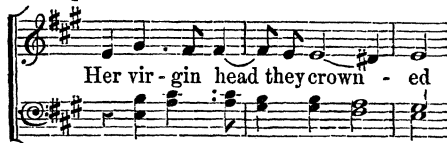
The specimens of Weelkes quoted by Burney, give no adequate idea of the genius of that skilful contrapuntist, who excelled chiefly in the management of numerous parts; and his contribution to the *Oriana* volume, 'As Vesta was from Latmos hill descending,' is a notable example of his grandeur, variety, and power in full composition. Our historian selects his compositions for quotation on account of Shakespeare's words, of which he well says, that "they were produced by an author, whose memory is so dear to the nation, that every fragment of his works becomes daily more interesting."

As the means of consulting madrigals in score, though much increased of late, have not yet become extensive, we would speak of this interesting national subject, as it concerns our estimate of the composers, under correction of the musicians to whom a continued practical experience in madrigal societies has communicated a higher authority. Appreciating, however, a composer by the uniformity and constancy of his success, which is a good general rule, we venture to place John Benet in the highest rank of English secular musicians. Whether Benet was an or-

ganist or a singer,—whether he held any official appointment, or was merely an amateur, can scarcely now be ascertained. Anthony Wood, the great friend of musicians, omits all mention of him in his chronicles of the Oxford University; and all we know of him is given in a little sentence from the preface of a book published by Ravenscroft in 1614, in which he is described as “a gentleman admirable for all kinds of composures, either in art or ayre, simple or mixed.” An air at this time, it is to be remembered, meant a piece chiefly in harmony of four parts. Burney speaks of Benet as one of our best madrigalists. “His melody was more phrased and *chantante* than that of most of his contemporaries.” He possessed, at an early stage of the art, natural melody, skill in canon, sentiment, expression, and even comic humour. It is peculiar to our vocal music, even to the time of Handel, that composers set their melodious fancy or their contrapuntal science at work through the agency of particular words. Such words, for instance, as “up,” “down,” “follow,” “leap,” “dance,” &c., always find some significant interpretation in the music. But notwithstanding this formality of the day, there is in the works of Benet such a judicious contrast of long and short notes, that the most elegant musical taste is gratified. The opening of the madrigal “All creatures now are merry-minded,” stands alone, through the excellence of its sustained melody and the expression of its flowing parts. This work is a model of the large and bold style of the author. “Come shepherds follow me,” is small in design but elegant withal, and full of sentiment. The parts move imitatively at first, according to the invitation of the words; but the ‘shepherds’ being called to see Cupid lying asleep, the slow notes of repose which paint this picture are of the tenderest and most graceful description. In addressing ‘Thyrsis,’ the peevish swain who unwillingly hears the note of the cuckoo, Benet humourously introduces into his madrigal the exact song of that bird, as still performed annually, with unbounded applause, in the green woods of England. These sounds—just such as Beethoven gives to us in the Pastoral Symphony, are almost the only ones uttered by the large choir of summer birds which can be exactly expressed in musical notation. If ever music alone were permitted to speak the character of its author, Benet must have been a genial, polished, and elegant-minded person, an admirer of poetry, and well read in its chief volume—the book of nature.

John Wilbye, a teacher of music who lived in Austin Friars, and first published madrigals in 1598, was at least the equal of Benet in natural genius. His greatest works are “Lady, when I behold,” and “Flora gave me fairest flowers.” In his Oriana Madrigal, the ceremony of crowning

the queen with the olive wreath of peace, suggests to his imagination this modern, tender, and beautiful phrase:—



This, excusing the somewhat awkward prosody, is like an anticipation of Mozart by two centuries. The old Madrigals abound in similar flowers of melody and harmony. Are they exotic or of native growth? We meet in Morley, in Ellis Gibbons, &c., with modern progressions like the following:—



which wants only this alteration to be pure Mozart, and music of the 19th century:—



While the sudden perfection of the skill of the old English masters in the art raises our admiration, it must be admitted that they had before them the works of Palestrina, of Luca Marenzio, and Orlando di Lasso, as models. Mr. Yonge, the editor of “Musica Transalpina,” in his dedication to the Lord Talbot, writes quaintly; “Since I first began to keep house in this city it hath been no small comfort unto me that a great number of gentlemen and merchants of good account (as well of this realm as of foreign nations) have taken in good part such entertainments of pleasure as my poor ability was able to afford them, both by the exercise of music daily used in my house, and by furnishing them with books of that kind sent me out of Italy.” It seems, therefore, that Italian vocal music was going on every-day in Mr. Yonge’s house, and very often in the houses of the gentlemen whom he supplied with parts. Composers naturally made scores of the madrigals for themselves, examined their construction, learned the true principles of beauty as developed by the Italian masters, and quickly became their rivals.

Thomas Morley, the pupil of Bird, seems to have been a musician formed more by the assiduous study of Italian models than by the powers of original genius, such as that by which Benet and Wilbye were manifestly endowed. He graduated with Dowland as a Bachelor of Music in 1588. He appears to have been a pleasant man, and certainly was the greatest musical authority of his time. Under the patronage of the Earl of Nottingham he undertook the collection and editorship of the Oriana Madrigals, inviting the most celebrated composers to assist him, and contributing two compositions himself.

Continued from page 314.

This work, it is said, was intended to soothe the melancholy of the declining years of Queen Elizabeth, who in guise of Oriana complacently heard herself addressed in strains of romantic and even religious adoration, lulled at sixty-eight in the pleasing dream that she still captivated all hearts. One peculiarity of the Oriana Madrigals is, that they chiefly end with the burden—"Then sang the shepherds and nymphs of Diana—long live fair Oriana;" the exceptions are in two, which were composed after the Queen's death, and where the ending is changed into—"In Heaven lives Oriana." These closes, which are often distinguished by a grand augmentation of subject in the bass, and a knot of close counterpoint in the upper parts, are often of a character too religious and elevated to be addressed to any sublunary being.

Even the plan of this English work was not entirely original. It was preceded in point of actual composition, if not in publication, by an Italian collection of Madrigals, entitled *Il trionfo di Dori*, in which the same burthen, *Viva la bella Dori*, runs through every one of the twenty-nine works contributed. Palestrina, Luca Marenzio, and Constanza Porta, are among the composers of this work.

Morley's reputation is said to have been greatly promoted in England by his "Plain and easy introduction to practical music," a didactic work, written in dialogue, in the quaint style of Izaak Walton's "Angler." Burney charges him with having, in this work, borrowed many examples of useful information, in old counterpoint, from the compendium of an Italian named Tigrini, without acknowledgement; a venial offence, and possibly a mere accidental omission. This fact, however, shows in him a due appreciation of the merits of the Italians and a free commerce with their works. As a writer on science, he could appeal to no higher authority. His book on composition was actually republished in the last century, for want of a better, under the nose of Dr. Burney, with whom he is evidently no favorite, and who speaks of him with faint praise, as a "studious and ingenious musician." However, the Burial Service by Morley, which Boyce has preserved, and which was performed by the choirs of Westminster, St. Paul's, and the Chapel Royal, at the funeral of George II., in 1760, is highly commended for its solemn effect, by the Doctor, who was a listener on the occasion.

The reputation of Milton's father as a composer, is proved by his contributions to numerous publications of the day, in common with the best artists. His York Psalm Tune is still in use. Wilbye published several of Milton's compositions in his collections; and both of them being citizens, there was probably a frequent friendly

communication between Bread Street and Austin Friars. In Ravenscroft's Psalms, and Sir William Leighton's *Lamentations*, there are also compositions by old Milton. He has one madrigal in *Oriana* which is far from equal to the best; and Burney's character of him is perhaps not incorrect—that "he was equal in science, if not in genius, to the best musicians of his age." The poet, however, at least admired his father, and in an address to him, unites their harmonious souls in a strain of elegance and filial tenderness. He thanks his father for paternal care in his education, and continues—"Do not, I pray you, condemn the sacred muses, nor think them light and destitute, in whose service you yourself expert, compose a thousand sounds to fitting measures, and skilful to vary the singing voice by a thousand modulations, become deservedly the heir of Arion's name. Is it wonderful that it has fallen to your lot to beget me a poet, when joined so closely by dear blood we follow cognate arts and kindred studies? Apollo, wishing to make division of himself, gave one gift to me and another to my parent, and we, father and son, hold the divided god." Besides the graceful and passionate touches in this poetical effusion, we may observe that Milton congratulates himself that his love of letters and the arts, will cause him to live remote from baleful passions. He well exclaims "Hence! watchful cares. Hence! complaint, and the distorted sight of envy with transverse glance."

In the life of Milton by his nephew, Phillips, prefixed to the English translation of his state letters, it is said, that "During his travels in Italy, he collected a chest or two of choice music books, particularly of Luca Marenzio, Monteverde, Orazio Vecchi, &c." That Monteverde was a composer of genius, may be seen by a very elegant madrigal inserted in Burney's history; but that he is accurately described as the first who used double discords, such as $\sharp\flat$, &c., is doubtful. He was certainly censured for this innovation by critics in 1600, but Carissimi had already done the same thing in Jephtha, and our own Thomas Bateson, also, about the same time, in his admirable "Oriana's farewell," in which occurs this beautiful organ cadence—to which the appropriate words sung are 'heavenly harmony':—



Here at least is one of Monteverde's double discords employed with great taste. While we notice that every fine innovation in music has by turns had its adversaries, we may congratulate the tolerance and facility of the present age which

shows practical good sense at least in the conviction that nothing which is not well founded will last. The innovator must pay the penalty of public opinion; but he is not molested by party animosity or personal attack. The first discoverers and the last improvers of the standard beauties of music deserve alike to share applause; but it is as difficult to ascertain the former, as it is certain and easy to pronounce upon the latter. We would not for instance ruffle the seraphic plumage of old Handel, or disturb his property in the beautiful harpsichord fugue in F# minor of his *Suites*, merely because we find in Queen Elizabeth's virginal book a tune by Robert Johnson, with this point—



On the same principle, as exhibiting the perfection of the thing, we must consider double discords and suspensions as peculiarly the province of Sebastian Bach, who first, as every organist knows, served them up in a perfect feast, as for example:—



How many would now join Carissimi and Monteverde, and Thomas Bateson, in applauding such a composition as this?

Anthony Wood has the following memorandum on Bateson in the *Fasti Oxonienses*, under the date 1619:—

A proposal was made about the *Act* time for one Thomas Bateson, Bachelor of Music, to be incorporated; but whether he was really so or not I cannot tell. In the beginning of the reign of K. James I, I find him organist of the cathedral church in the city of Chester, and now organist and master of the children of the cathedral church of the blessed Trinity, called Christ Church, in Dublin; where, as I suppose, he took the degree of Bachelor of Music. He was a person esteemed very eminent in his profession, especially after he had published the first and second part of English Madrigals to 3, 4, 5 and 6 voices.

It will suffice to refer the reader to the madrigal "Oriana's farewell,"—to the canonical point, "Then sing ye shepherds," more especially—to to convince him that this English master possessed genius and science of a very unusual character.

To be continued.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Minor, Aberdeen.—Your letter came too late for notice this number; we will endeavour to find room for it in our next.

H. S., Salford, shall have a private letter if he will send his name and address, relative to concertina music.

Cephas.—The anthem is not fitted for our Journal.

A. H. H., Walsall, should refer to a musical grammar for the explanation of the chord he mentions; Röhner's *Theory* would inform him.

E. C., the City.—We will endeavour to meet your wishes, but as it will take some time, we crave your patience.

P. L., Walton.—The word *soli* is used in part music to indicate where one of each voice should sing, in contradistinction to tutti or chorus, shewing where the full choir join in.

G. E., Birmingham.—Tallis's *Service* was originally sung with the Melody in the Tenor, as printed for the Morning and Evening, by our Publisher.

T. P. S., Bradford, is thanked for his letter and suggestion, but the price of our work cannot advantageously be altered.

W. O., Wales.—There is an account of the life and labors of the late Dr. Mainzer, published a few years since, which would furnish you with the ampler details you require.

TAXES ON KNOWLEDGE.

THE direct Taxes on the present number of the *Musical Times* amount to—

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besides that the proprietor has to enter into large recognizances to the Queen, and is subject to penalties of £20. and upwards for omitting any one of the multifarious requirements of the Stamp Act.

This amount, £6. 3s. (were the Taxes repealed), might be spent in improving the work or lowering its price. It is incumbent upon all who desire the extension of EDUCATION, to protest, on every possible opportunity, against the continuance of the Taxes on Knowledge, especially by a Government which professes to encourage LEARNING.

Brief Chronicle of the last Month.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC. The periodical examination for the King's Scholarship was held on the 19th instant. The examiners were Messrs. Potter, Goss, Lucas, Blagrove, Howell, Macfarren, and Dorrell. The candidates amounted to thirty-three; of whom Miss Rosetta Venning and Master John Barnett were successful. Miss Aylward and Masters Pettit and Baumer were also found entitled to honourable mention.

MISS KATE LODER, the accomplished pianist, was married on the 16th, to Henry Thompson, Esq., of Wimpole Street.

HERR FORMES has received a munificent present from the Emperor at St. Petersburg: an elegant diamond ring, the value of which exceeds 3,000 francs.

HENRI STREICH, organist to the church "Bonne Nouvelle," in Paris, recently died at the early age of thirty years; he was highly esteemed as a pianist.

MR JOHN EAMES, for many years treasurer to the Choral Fund, and who took an active and official part in the arrangements of the Great Westminster Abbey Festival, for which he received a handsome silver vase, departed this life on the 10th instant, at the age of sixty-eight.